

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 IO-14 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 SR-02 ORM-03

(ISO) W

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R 291118Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3340

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4268

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS

SUBJ: SEBASTIA SETTLERS REMOVED BY IDF

REF: TEL AVIV 4245

1. SEBASTIA SETTLERS WERE PEACEFULLY REMOVED IN IDF OPERATION CONDUCTED BETWEEN 05:30/08:30 LOCAL TIME JULY 29. ACCORDING TO RADIO ISRAEL, SETTLERS WERE CARRIED TO TRUCKS WITHOUT RESISTANCE AND TRANSPORTED TO JERUSALEM.

2. EVICTION FOLLOWED INTENSIVE TALKS BY SETTLEMENT LEADERS WITH DEFMIN PERES JULY 28. IDF CHIEF OF STAFF GUR ALSO MET WITH SETTLERS. GOVERNMENT TOOK FIRM POSITION THAT IT WOULD NOT PERMIT UNAUTHORIZED SETTLEMENTS AND WAS PREPARED TO USE FORCE IF NECESSARY TO EVICT SETTLERS. PERES REPORTEDLY REPEATED EARLIER OFFER THAT IF SETTLERS AGREED TO MOVE VOLUNTARILY, HE WOULD PROPOSE AT NEXT CABINET MEETING THAT ALTERNATIVE SITE NEAR JORDAN RIVER VALLEY
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BE AUTHORIZED.

3. IN ADDITION TO SPATE OF STATEMENTS BY POLITICAL LEADERS AND PRESS COMMENTARY, EVENTS FOLLOWING ATTEMPTED SETTLEMENT IN SEBASTIA JULY 26 INCLUDED PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS IN JERUSALEM BY YOUNG LABOR PARTY ACTIVISTS AND AT THE NEGEV FARM OF LIKUD LEADER ARIEL SHARON BY MEMBERS OF MAPAM AND LEFT-WING PARTIES.

4. COMMENT: REMOVAL OF SEBASTIA SETTLERS WAS SECOND MAJOR CHALLENGE TO RABIN GOVERNMENT WITHIN LESS THAN TWO MONTHS IN DEALING WITH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES OF JEWISH SETTLEMENTS ON WEST BANK. ALTHOUGH PLANNED SOME WEEKS AGO, SEBASTIA SETTLEMENT, COMING IN WAKE OF DAYAN'S KNESSET SPEECH JULY 23 URGING VIRTUALLY UNRESTRICTED RIGHTS OF SETTLEMENT, POSED TEST TO GOVERNMENT ON THIS ISSUE AND ESCALATED POLITICAL DEBATE.

5. ATTEMPTED SETTLEMENT REVEALED UNDERCURRENT OF DIFFERENCES WITHIN MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTICULARLY LIKUD. LIBERAL PARTY LEADERS HAVE CRITICIZED BEHAVIOR OF LIKUD COLLEAGUES FOR THEIR INVOLVEMENT AT SEBASTIA. IN LABOR-MAPAM ALIGNMENT, YOUNGER ELEMENTS IN LABOR PARTY CALLED FOR FIRM ACTION AGAINST SETTLERS, WHILE MAPAM REPORTEDLY PLANS TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN AGAINST FURTHER SETTLEMENTS.

6. GOVERNMENT, CERTAINLY BACKED BY PUBLIC AND PRESS OPINION, DEMONSTRATED ITS RESOLVE TO REGULATE NEW SETTLEMENTS. DESPITE POSSIBLE OFFER TO SEBASTIA SETTLERS OF ALTERNATIVE SITE, DEBATE GENERATED OVER WEEKEND WILL CONTINUE IN PERIOD AHEAD AND PRESSURE GOVERNMENT TO STATE SPECIFICALLY ITS WEST BANK SETTLEMENT POLICY IN CONTEXT OF MOVING TOWARD PEACE AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN.
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